

Burnham Area Study

City of West Allis, Wisconsin



Burnham Area Study

A Planning and Design Analysis

City of West Allis, Wisconsin

January 1979

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Honorable Mayor Jack Barlich and
Members of the Common Council
West Allis City Hall
7525 West Greenfield Avenue
West Allis, Wisconsin 53214

Gentlemen:

We are pleased to submit this Burnham Area Study to the City of West Allis. The recommendations contained in this Plan chart a course of action that we believe can effectively guide the revitalization of the Burnham neighborhood.

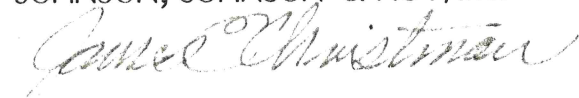
Fortunately, this Plan is the result of the work efforts of many people in your community. Several individuals representing the City's Administration, and a host of residents from Burnham itself have ably contributed to the production of this Plan. Also, Mr. Elgar Williams and Mr. Dave Weinheimer must be commended for their extensive and significant contributions.

We have enjoyed our working relationship with the citizens of West Allis, and particularly with the Burnham area residents. We trust this Plan will provide you all with the guidance needed to improve your neighborhood.

Thank you for allowing us to assist the City of West Allis with this effort.

Sincerely,

JOHNSON, JOHNSON & ROY/inc.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

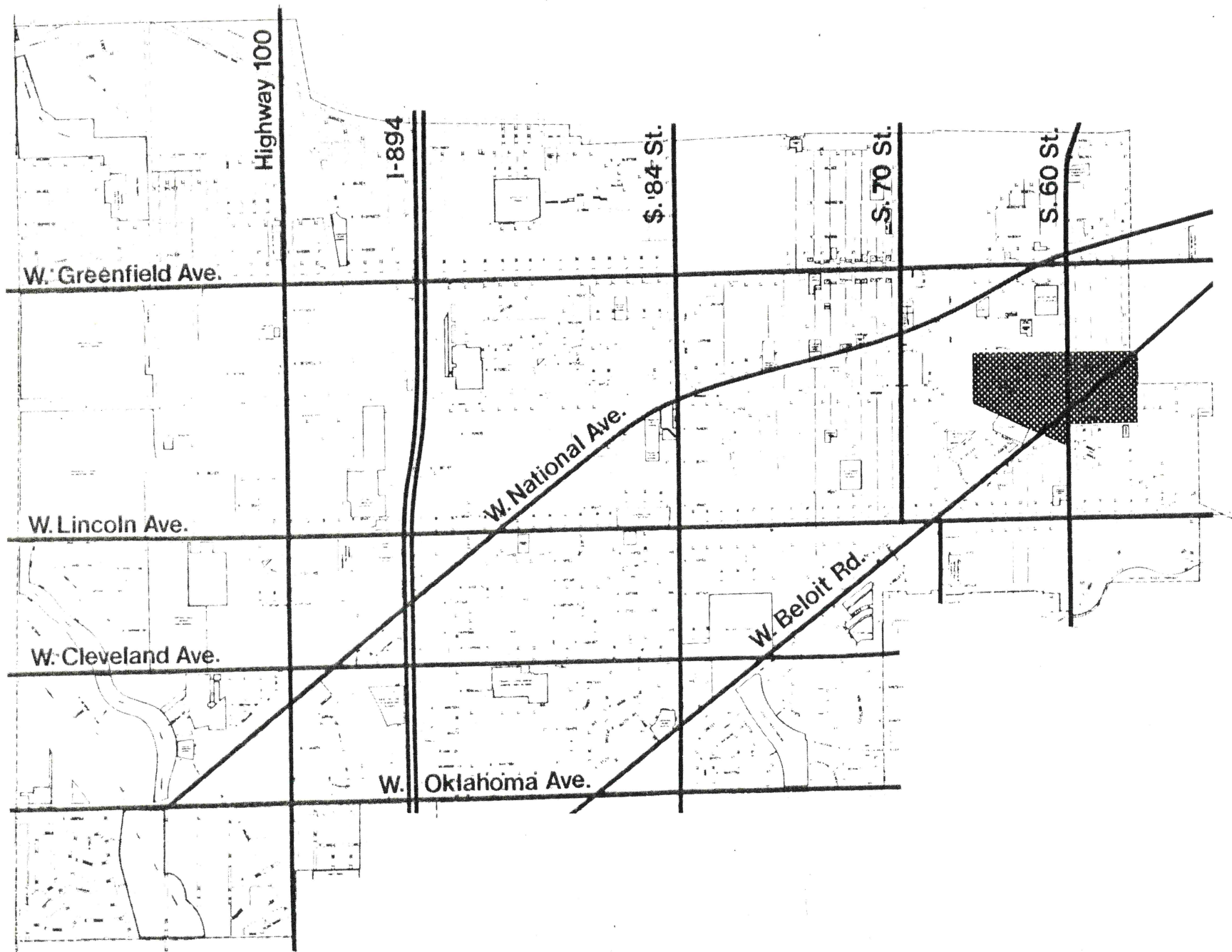
INTRODUCTION

Neighborhoods form the backbone of West Allis, Wisconsin. They are the primary centers of activity which contribute to the City's overall vitality. Characterized by tremendous resources, every effort must be made to capitalize on these advantages, while alleviating shortcomings that also are evident in City neighborhoods. This is particularly relevant for Burnham. As a neighborhood that boasts stable residential areas and a character of years past, it also suffers from a degree of disinvestment. In response to these varied conditions, West Allis has supported the development of a revitalization program for Burnham. This planning and urban design study is the result of that decision.

Located toward the City's eastern edge, the Burnham study area is bounded by West Mitchell on the north, West Rogers on the south, and South 63rd and South 56th Streets on the west and east sides respectively (see Figure 1).

In this report, existing conditions are reviewed first, with an eye toward identifying neighborhood strengths and weaknesses. This evaluation permits the identification of needs that must be satisfied if revitalization is to be successful. Guidelines and recommendations are proposed in response to these needs, based on City-wide goals and objectives put forth in the 1990 Master Plan for Land Use.

Next, phased action programs are proposed that describe where and when the recommendations should be implemented. Also, implementation strategies are reviewed that should be utilized during the revitalization process. Taken together, these complementary proposals form a program that can be used to create a better living environment for the residents of Burnham.



Summary of Findings

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Burnham neighborhood is one of the oldest in West Allis. Originally a family-oriented settlement, the area is now the home of numerous elderly, single persons, as well as families. This mixture of residents places varying demands on the neighborhood, particularly in terms of housing. Although residents seek accommodations which suit their housing needs, limited supply and a lack of alternatives make it difficult for people to move when desired.

Businesses in Burnham vary in quality and serve different-sized markets. Generally, those which successfully draw from the immediate area and other nearby neighborhoods are most stable. The core of the commercial area centers around West Burnham between South 60th and South 58th Streets, but this area's significance has lessened as new shop owners look for space along other major roadways. Overall, the business district lacks an identity and evidence of a commitment to upgrade the area. Also, insufficient off-street parking is available for shoppers.

Other problems in the neighborhood include those created by established industrial concerns which are not well buffered from adjacent activities, a lack of park and recreation facilities, and several minor circulation problems. Each of these situations, plus those previously described, must be carefully considered during future planning efforts.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Land use in the neighborhood can be broken down into three kinds of areas: those which are currently stable, areas requiring reinforcement, and issue areas. Stable areas include those which have endured over time and have accommodated one primary activity. Examples include selected residential areas that are characterized by an obvious pride in home ownership, pleasant tree-lined streets, and a location convenient to shops and other services, as well as an industrial district which serves as the major employer in the neighborhood. The strengths which characterize these areas should be further enhanced and used to advantage.



Areas requiring reinforcement have certain strong points but do not contribute to the neighborhood's identity as much as they might. These areas accommodate a primary use that provides a needed service and convenience to residents, but need improvements like additional parking, landscaping, open space and zoning support for them to acquire a stable nature. Burnham's shopping areas, entryways and multiple-family housing developments are examples of this land use area.

Finally, issue areas include all districts that would benefit from a change in land use. These areas are characterized by a variety of activities, none of which are so predominant in size or function that they strongly influence the area's future use of land. Changes required to improve the quality of these areas may entail redevelopment, or the simple reuse of existing structures. In either case, the goal is to improve the area by making similar activities available within designated areas. Several areas fall into this category, each of which needs to be looked at individually.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE

West Allis' 1990 Master Plan for Land Use includes guidelines and recommendations for dealing with these patterns of land use. The major concepts that guide Burnham's revitalization program include:

1. Protecting residential areas from intrusion by other activities.
2. Providing buffers between adjacent, but different, land uses.
3. Providing a range of housing alternatives to meet the needs of the neighborhood.
4. Reinforcing the primary shopping area.
5. Maintaining stable industries.
6. Providing parks and recreation areas for all neighborhood residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This plan's recommendations make up an action program which, when implemented, will help revitalize the Burnham neighborhood. The action program includes three phases: early improvements, short-range opportunities, and long-range opportunities.

Early improvements include actions that should be taken during the next one to five years, primarily by the City. Recommended actions include reviewing and strengthening all pertinent codes and ordinances, particularly as they relate to zoning and housing, and physically improving street rights-of-way.

Short-range opportunities include actions that ought to occur during the next three-to-ten years. Public and private sector involvement during this time should be roughly comparable. Major recommended efforts include housing and business redevelopment, off-street parking construction, and a review of programs initiated during the early improvements phase.

Long-range opportunities include actions that ought to occur during the next eight to twelve years from now. Major housing and commercial redevelopment projects are expected to typify this phase. Areas which are most suitable for this activity are identified on a long-range opportunities plan.

Existing Conditions

EXISTING CONDITIONS

An understanding of existing conditions in Burnham can be achieved by describing the neighborhood's residents and land use.

POPULATION

Different kinds of people have different needs, and this is evident from the way residents of Burnham use their neighborhood. They participate in neighborhood activities, shop at local businesses, and live in nearby homes and apartments. Because this variety exists, the neighborhood's general population characteristics must be understood to ensure this plan is responsive to the needs of the people who live in Burnham.

Relative to City-wide averages, the Burnham neighborhood has: (1) less than its share of youths under the age of eighteen; (2) more than its share of people 62 years of age and older; (3) roughly 50% more people who live in one-person households; (4) about twice as many female heads of households; and (5) an average household income that is about three-fourths the size of the City-wide average.¹ These statements have several implications for future land use.

¹Bureau of Census, 1970 Census of Population.

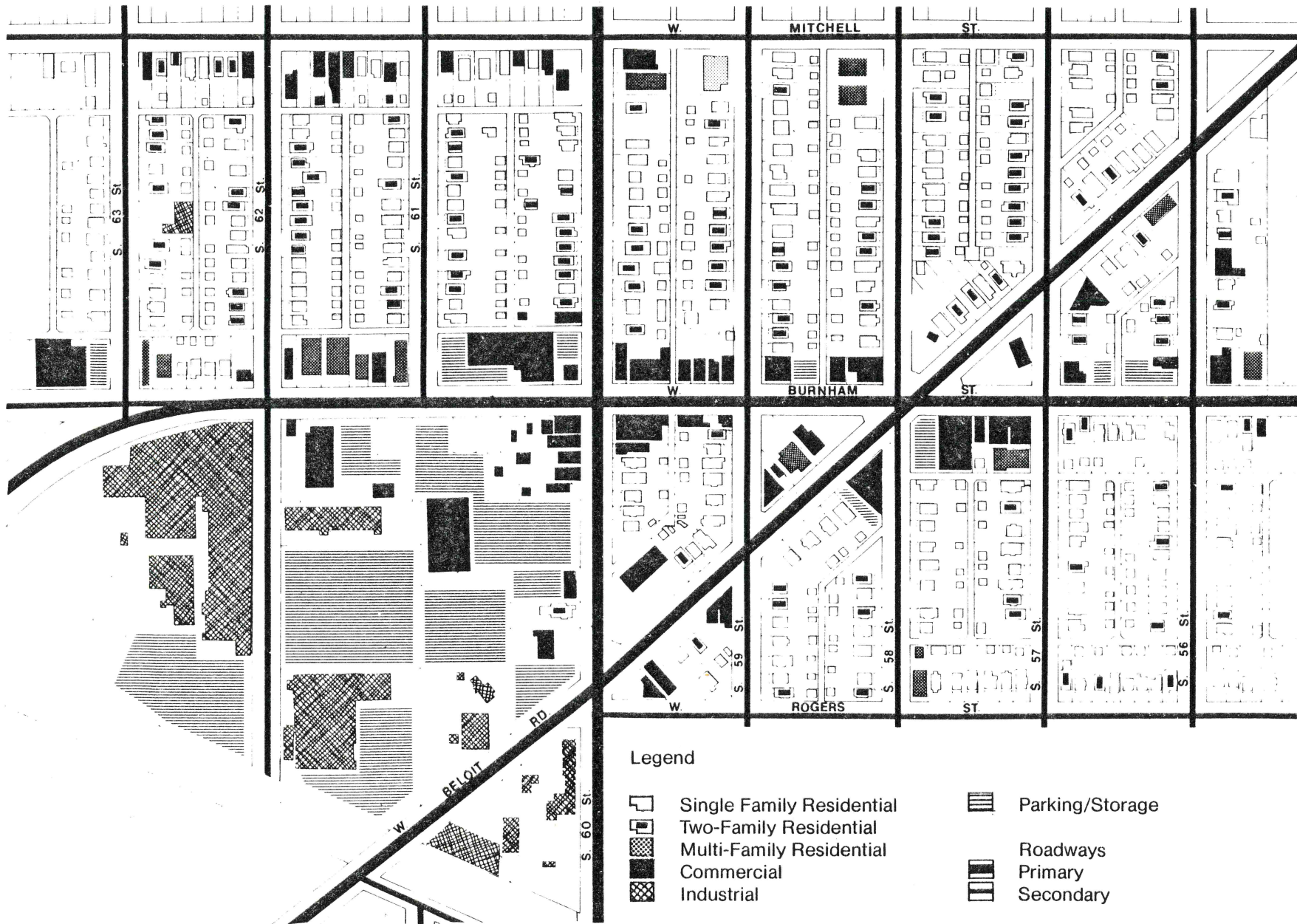
First, a variety of housing alternatives is needed in Burnham. The high percentage of elderly and one-person households suggest small apartments are just as necessary as single-family dwellings. In addition, housing costs must be as responsive to low and moderate incomes as possible. The concentration of elderly also suggests that new housing should be placed within walking distance of Burnham's shopping area. Many elderly do not have automobiles and must have stores near to their homes.

Second, the declining number of youths reflects a declining birth rate, as well as a decreasing number of young families who live in the neighborhood. New housing opportunities are needed to help attract young families back to Burnham. Also, as one-person households are accommodated in units that are suited to their needs, larger homes will become available for larger households.

Finally, as the housing needs of residents are met, other services and conveniences must be tailored to the needs of the neighborhood's population. Pedestrian-oriented treatments should receive greater attention, parks should cater to all age levels, and retailers should stock goods that are appealing to neighborhood shoppers.

LAND USE

A variety of land uses exist in Burnham of which business, housing, and industry predominate (see Figure 2). These various activities, and the roadway system that serves them, combine to create a distinctive neighborhood character that must be understood before this plan can be developed further.



Business Activity

Many businesses in Burnham cater to people who live within walking distance of the shopping area.² Of these neighborhood-oriented shops, those which satisfy daily needs are generally high in quality and stable, like the local drug store and bakery. Other stores, which may satisfy the less frequent and occasional needs of residents, are usually lower in overall quality and characterized by high tenant turnover. In all cases, businesses are often run by a family or single individual who rents, rather than owns, space for their store. Turnover in businesses, then, usually involves a tenant change, rather than a change in ownership.

Several other businesses draw from neighborhoods found beyond the boundaries of Burnham. Some of these are specialized in nature but compete well because similar services and products are not readily available elsewhere. For example, Burnham's hardware store draws heavily from Six Points because it is the only store of its kind in the two neighborhoods. The bowling alley and foreign car dealership are other examples. Combined with the higher quality locally-oriented shops, these businesses provide the backbone for Burnham's business economy and serve long-standing customers who rely on their continued existence.

One major business, Farrell's, had widespread attraction but competed less successfully than it might have. As a grocery store, it was the largest in the Burnham neighborhood. Even with this advantage, the shopping needs survey indicated numerous potential customers from Burnham travelled to other business centers for groceries. Van's in Six Points and Kohl's in Pioneer, for example, attracted many shoppers from the Burnham area. Because Farrell's had the potential for "anchoring" the community's business district, it is essential a similar operation be successfully established in the Burnham area.



²Information for this section was drawn from a shopping needs phone survey conducted by the West Allis Planning Department during March, 1978.

The shopping needs survey also indicated that several automobile-related businesses along West Beloit draw from outside the neighborhood. The pull these businesses have is quite pronounced and worth preserving to help ensure the long-term viability of the shopping district.

Except for the low quality businesses, sales and revenues have generally increased for stores in Burnham during the 1970's. Store rents and property values have increased as well, but only at the rate of inflation. Presumably, demand for store space is not very high, or rents and values would have increased at a rate faster than experienced.

Many structures in the Burnham business area are used for residential as well as commercial purposes. Typically, apartments are located above the businesses, thereby creating a mixed use. This situation is beneficial as it maintains a captive market of shoppers who live within walking distance of the area's businesses.

Commercial development is further characterized by the growth of business out along the neighborhood's major roadways, even though location opportunities exist closer to the center of the shopping area. This situation threatens the strength of the core commercial area, and detracts from its identity.

The commercial area's identity is being jeopardized for another reason. Although opportunities exist for upgrading the appearance of the area's structures, improvements are noticeably absent. Remodeling, renovation work and aesthetic improvements are severely lacking. Where improvements have been made, a commitment to quality maintenance is often not evident. As indicated by building permit information, most improvements have been confined to the interiors of structures.

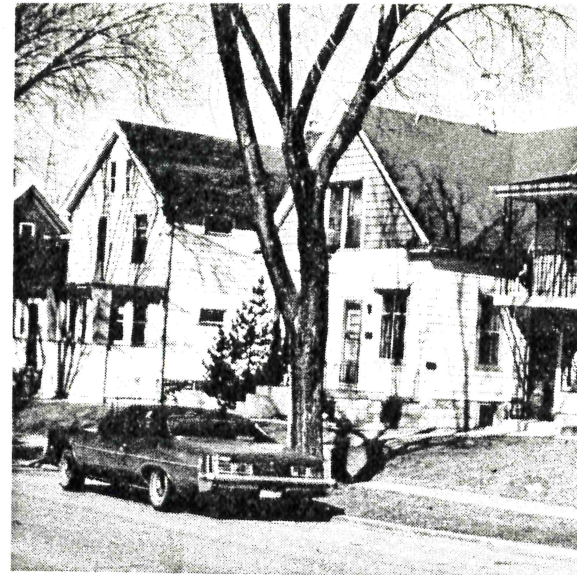
Streetscapes also are neglected. Landscaping is virtually nonexistent in the area. As a result, the appearance and character of the shopping district is less appealing than it might be.

Housing

Various kinds of homes are available in Burnham. Roughly one-third of all units in the neighborhood are single-family dwellings, while about 45% of all units are housed in two-family structures. The remaining units are clustered into multiple-family dwellings, most of which are located along major roadways.

Of all the units in the study area, over 50% are renter-occupied. Rents and housing values are well below the City's average, although both have been rising. Generally, residential property values have been appreciating at a rate that exceeds that for commercial properties found in Burnham. It appears that housing is in higher demand than commercial floor space. This is substantiated by the very low housing vacancy rates found in the neighborhood.

Structurally, the housing in Burnham has more major and minor structural problems than the average neighborhood in West Allis. As indicated by a City-wide housing condition survey, roughly 6% of all homes in the neighborhood have major structural problems (faulty foundations, roofs, or walls)³. This is about one and one-half times as many as found in the City's average neighborhood.



³Housing survey conducted in May, 1978.

Houses in Burnham also tend to have more than their share of minor structural defects. About 40% show evidence of one or more minor structural problems, like poorly maintained gutters, downspouts, or doors and windows. Many of these problems could be upgraded significantly by pursuing a comprehensive painting and clean-up program.

Additional maintenance problems are evident particularly as far as garages are concerned. Typically, these structures are detached and face an alley. In many cases, a garage has major and minor structural defects even though the respective dwelling might be in excellent condition. Old and unused cars are stored in the alleys which further add to their poor image.

While major and minor structural problems characterize some dwellings in Burnham, an obvious financial commitment to maintaining housing is apparent. Many homes have new siding, porches and other indications of renovation work. All or parts of many homes have been recently painted. Also, most lots that were vacant a short time ago now accommodate new dwellings, most of which are two-family structures. The obvious personal commitment to maintaining the residential areas contrasts markedly with the lack of a similar commitment in the business area. Residents in Burnham clearly are proud of their homes and work hard to make sure their homes contribute to the pleasant atmosphere found in this residential area.

Industry

All industry in the neighborhood is located southwest of the intersection of West Burnham and South 60th Streets. The largest structure in this area, Eaton's Drop Forge Plant, is one of Burnham's oldest developments dating back to around 1919. It was responsible for enticing many employees who wanted to be within walking distance of work to build homes within the vicinity of the company. Since its beginning, the Plant has always been Burnham's major employer and currently has around 200 employees.

The facility's historical significance and status as an employer are well known among neighborhood residents. Its long-term presence in Burnham provides a landmark that contributes substantially to the neighborhood's character. Unfortunately, these advantages are overshadowed by the noise and vibration that is associated with the Drop Forge. The pounding of the hammers creates an unpleasant living environment for people anywhere near the Plant. Past efforts aimed at eliminating these problems have been unsuccessful, and residents are concerned adverse conditions will persist. The City of West Allis is striving to improve conditions in the area through the enactment of a noise and vibration ordinance.

Other conflicts between this industry and adjacent development are minimal, although some buffers could be appropriately established to lessen the visual conflicts found in the area. Parking lots could be screened and the maintenance of grounds pursued to make the area more attractive. Any expansion contemplated by industry in this area must be carefully planned to ensure additional visual conflicts do not result.

Supplies and materials shipped to companies in the area arrive by truck. The most convenient truck route to and from the area runs along West Burnham to South 60th Street or West Beloit Road. Clearly, this creates hazards for pedestrians and shoppers who use the commercial area. Several business owners, though, do not feel that truck traffic detracts from Burnham's appeal.

Parks and Open Spaces

There are no public parks or open spaces in the neighborhood. Although nearby recreational opportunities, including Washington and Rogers Playgrounds, satisfy most adolescent and pre-adolescent needs, other residents in Burnham have no facilities available to them. This is particularly true for tots and adults of all ages.

Open space deficiencies in residential areas are most evident between West Burnham and West Mitchell Streets. They also exist south of West Burnham, but to a lesser extent due to the presence of Rogers Playground. Further, open space is lacking in Burnham's shopping district. Currently, there are no areas available for shoppers to sit, relax and socialize, which detracts from the appeal of the business area.

To alleviate these shortcomings, a major difficulty must be overcome. Burnham's highly developed nature means that parks cannot be readily provided. This plan must be sensitive to this condition and look towards creative approaches to satisfy the park and open space needs of neighborhood residents.

Circulation

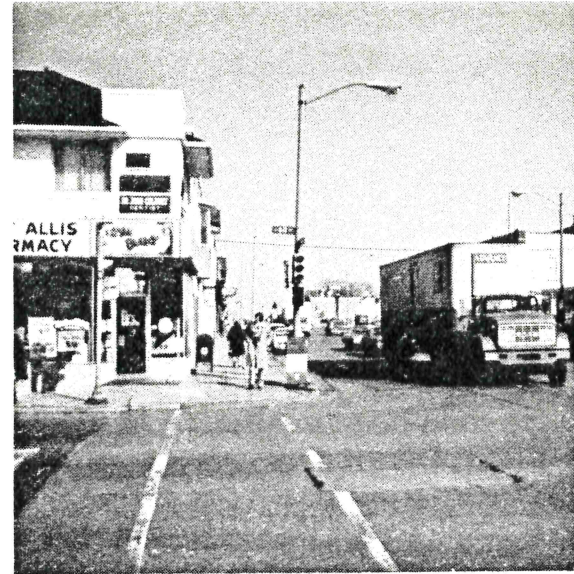
Primary access to and from Burnham is provided by South 60th Street and West Beloit Road. The former offers a direct route north to Six Points and Interstate 94, and south to West Lincoln Avenue and southern Milwaukee. West Beloit serves as a major roadway leading east to West Milwaukee and west to the southwestern portion of West Allis. These roads are heavily traveled and often cause congestion in the Burnham business area. This is particularly true for South 60th, although traffic volumes on this road should decrease considerably once the stadium freeway is constructed. These congested conditions are a detriment to Burnham because they cause excessive noise, make it difficult to park on-street, and create hazards for shoppers. However, the neighborhood benefits from the exposure it gets from passing traffic. A large potential market of shoppers passes through Burnham each day, and plans for the business area should capitalize on this condition.

A recent traffic and parking study found that all intersections in Burnham operate below capacity, except for the intersection at South 60th Street and West Beloit Road.⁴ It was recommended that signalization be changed at this intersection to alleviate congestion. For this same intersection, it was also recommended that West Rogers Street be made one-way going eastbound from South 60th to South 59th Streets. In this manner, all approaches would be controlled by the light at the intersection and conform with pertinent State statutes.

Presently, there are no plans to resurface any streets in the neighborhood. All streets are in good-to-excellent condition and should not require paving improvements for some time.

A shortage of parking is evident in selected parts of the neighborhood. Shortages exist by the bowling alley and near the intersection of West Burnham and West Beloit. Shopkeepers also indicate that additional spaces are needed to service the stores along West Burnham between South 58th and 60th Streets. While most parking spaces are on-street in front of the various businesses, private off-street parking is also available for certain establishments that draw from beyond the neighborhood. Any plans that encourage the attraction of additional businesses to Burnham will have to include provisions for more parking. This would have to take the form of public off-street parking or private parking as required by zoning.

Pedestrian circulation in Burnham is accommodated by sidewalks that exist throughout the neighborhood. The walkways generally are well-maintained but are too narrow to permit people to pass with ease. In the shopping area, this problem is compounded by people entering and leaving shops, and getting in and out of parked cars. The narrow sidewalks also make it difficult to plant trees, provide benches, or create special entryways into stores. Because walking in Burnham is not a pleasant experience, people tend to walk less in the neighborhood than they might otherwise. This situation is not beneficial for the shopping area, nor does it take advantage of a neighborhood where a variety of activities exist within walking distance of one another.



⁴Schimpeler-Corradino Associates, "Traffic and Parking Study," West Allis, Wisconsin; 1976.

Other Features

Like parks and open spaces, few public or semi-public land uses are located in Burnham. Only one church and a storefront office for Project Involve are found in the neighborhood. Although this need not be a drawback in itself, it does mean that fewer people are drawn to Burnham than might be otherwise. Existing and future amenities in the neighborhood, then, must be strong in appeal and meet specific needs to help ensure Burnham's long-term viability. Also, plans must capitalize on the exposure the neighborhood gets from traffic that penetrates from several directions.

Historic features are limited in number. Although many structures are old, few are historically significant. One exception is located near the corner of South 60th and West Beloit. This dwelling is one of the City's original homesteads, but is poorly located and threatened by commercial and industrial growth. Care must be taken to make sure this kind of resource is not carelessly wasted, perhaps by relocating it to a different area.

Existing utilities can accommodate most new growth or redevelopment which takes place anywhere in Burnham. Sanitary sewer and stormwater sewer facilities can handle any reasonable increase in capacity. Sewer lines run along all major arterials and residential roadways. Water supply is basically adequate and also can accommodate an increase in demand. However, new water users that have excessive needs might require that capacity be upgraded to meet demand. This is likely to be true if a major multiple-family development or water-dependent industrial or commercial concern locates in the neighborhood. A major water line services the Burnham area and, therefore, additional water capacity is readily available.

Summary Analysis

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Land uses in Burnham can be grouped based on their relationship with each other and with the neighborhood's roadway system. These groupings are significant because they suggest how land should be used in the future.

STABLE AREAS

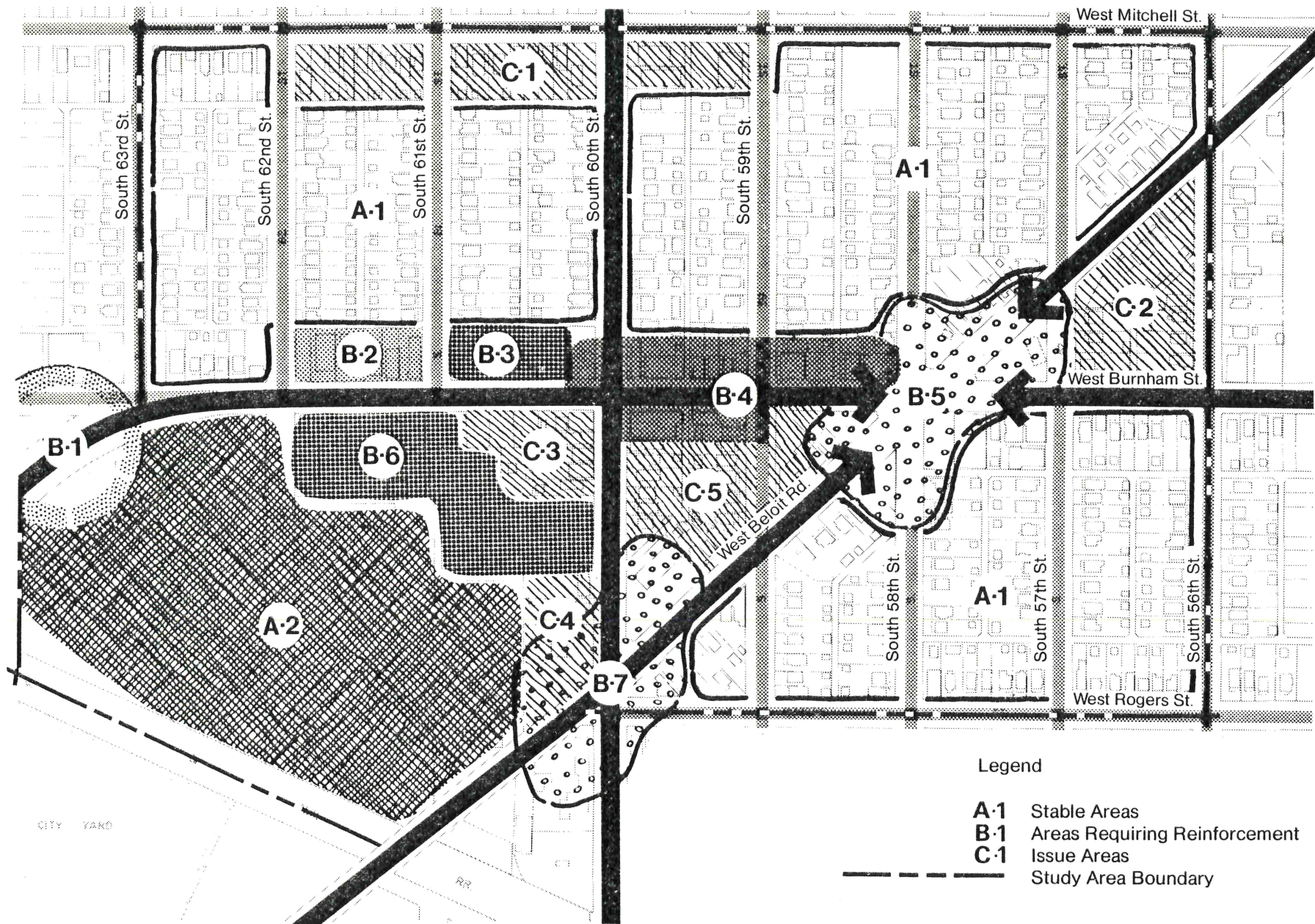
Several locations within the neighborhood have proven to be stable over time. One primary land use predominates in each area and has for many years. Their essentially unchanging character suggests they are viable and worth preserving. They have strengths that serve to create an identity for Burnham and qualities other land uses can relate with.

As Figure 3 shows, these stable areas include the following:

- A-1 Burnham's three residential areas make up the neighborhood's major strengths. They are located between 1) South 56th and South 60th Streets, north of West Burnham Street; 2) South 60th and South 63rd Streets, north of West Burnham; and 3) South 56th and South 60th Streets, north of West Rogers Street. The homes in these areas are high in quality and demonstrate a commitment to maintenance throughout. Problems that exist are generally minor and easily remedied.

Businesses are encroaching on the fringes of all three residential areas. Increasing numbers of mixed land use conflicts are resulting. Because the stability and appeal of the residential areas are threatened by encroachment, this trend must be stopped.

- A-2 The area's industrial core, located southwest of West Burnham and South 60th, has proved to be a stabilizing influence on the neighborhood. The companies provide employment and attract traffic to the neighborhood that helps support area businesses. Although certain problems are usually characteristic of industrial areas, these have been largely outweighed by the benefits gained from their presence.



If one of the industrial concerns needs land to expand, properties should be designated that will not result in encroachment on commercial or residential properties, like the historic home found in this area. Also, adverse visual impacts associated with this industrial area should be screened from adjacent properties.

AREAS REQUIRING REINFORCEMENT

Several areas within Burnham have the potential for becoming greater assets to the neighborhood than they currently are. These areas have strengths that can be built upon to further enhance their individual character. By capitalizing on these qualities, the overall appeal of Burnham will be heightened considerably. This plan and action program must carefully take advantage of these promising aspects.

Such areas are as follows (see Figure 3):

- B-1 When entering Burnham from the west, a change in the streetscape occurs near South 63rd Street. This transitional area, or image zone, is critical because it indicates where the neighborhood begins. A less dense residential area gives way to Burnham's more densely developed shopping district. The opportunity to create a pleasant entryway for the person passing through this area is clear. In turn, the potential for contributing to Burnham's identity is also evident.
- B-2 This area along West Burnham Street, between South 61st and South 62nd Streets, is developed for multiple-family housing and commercial uses. The appropriateness of businesses in this area is questionable when the following is considered: (1) multiple-family housing is the predominant use; (2) additional multiple-family development would increase the number of potential shoppers in the area; (3) businesses here do not help strengthen Burnham's commercial core. Based on these considerations, redevelopment of selected parcels for new housing should be considered.

B-3 This area northwest of West Burnham and South 60th Streets is an asset to Burnham due to the people who come to the neighborhood bowling alley. The attraction of this business to people outside of Burnham is a strength which should be enhanced. Aesthetic improvements, like appealing signage and tree plantings and increased parking, are treatments that would help ensure the long-term attractiveness of this area.

B-4 Burnham's shopping district, north and south of West Burnham between South 58th and South 60th Streets, has many qualities that make the area worth improving. First, several area businesses have been operating for many years. Second, existing businesses satisfy many daily convenience needs for nearby residents. Finally, this area is the focal point of activity and has a good location in terms of the exposure it gets from passing traffic. Improvements that make the area convenient and pleasant for shoppers to use should be promoted. Additional parking, new store fronts, creative signage, and sidewalk improvements are examples of items that can be considered.

B-5 Most of the businesses at West Burnham and West Beloit are automobile-related and benefit from an intersection location. Because these businesses supply essential services, this area should be maintained at least over the short-term for Burnham residents and others who visit the neighborhood.

This intersection's high visibility to westbound traffic is an asset that has not been exploited. Like the western edge of the neighborhood, the identity of Burnham could be greatly enhanced by improving the visual appearance of the area. Landscaping improvements, signage controls, and some alteration to the intersection's design could make the area more appealing while lessening its confusing nature for drivers and pedestrians.

B-6 This business area is quite unlike the core commercial area because it has the potential for attracting large numbers of shoppers who live outside of the neighborhood. A large store, formerly the home of Farrell's, is available for occupancy by another large retailer.



Before this location can act as a major drawing power, several improvements are needed. Facade and landscaping improvements could be used to upgrade the area's visual image. Additional parking could serve to make the area more convenient. Room exists to build additional stores that have a far-reaching market. Shoppers attracted to one store might then support others found here.

- B-7 This intersection at West Beloit Road and South 60th Street is very similar to the intersection at West Beloit and West Burnham. Most businesses here are automobile-related, and the area helps define the southern edge of the neighborhood. Its visual appearance is unappealing, and the right turn from West Rogers to go north on South 60th or east on West Beloit is not controlled by stoplights. Again, landscaping, signage and traffic control improvements should be considered.

ISSUE AREAS

Areas that could benefit from a change in land use are called issue areas. Often changes must be achieved through the process of redevelopment. In some cases, though, simple reuse of structures for designated activities is all that is required.

In Burnham, there are five issue areas identified on Figure 3. The characteristics of these properties, and their land use potential, can be described as follows:

- C-1 The three areas south of West Mitchell, between South 59th and South 62nd Streets, have a mixture of residential and commercial uses. In general, homes have been converted to accommodate small businesses. Although the introduction of new business to Burnham is a healthy sign, conversions of this type are improper. They tend to disturb the quiet character of the residential surroundings, rather than contribute to the vitality of the core business area. Conversions in this area must be discouraged and new business more appropriately located. This policy would serve to protect the integrity of the residential areas.

C-2 The character of the land, bounded by West Burnham, West Beloit, and South 56th Street, is similar to the property just described. Commercial development has encroached on a residential area, rather than locating in Burnham's core commercial district. Because these stores are isolated from the main shopping area, the appropriateness of their location is questionable. The redevelopment of this area for medium density, multiple-family residential dwellings might be appropriate for two reasons: (1) additional residents would help support the commercial district; (2) development of this type would be compatible with the lower density residential land uses that are adjacent on three sides.

C-3 Land use in this area just south of West Burnham Street includes shops, residences and vacant lots. These mixed uses are not compatible, nor is the quality of the structures which exist very high. No relationship is evident between this area and the business area located at its back door.

Several opportunities are possible for this area: (1) existing buildings could be upgraded and additional convenience shops built along West Burnham; (2) the area could be redeveloped to accommodate the growth of a small shopping center; (3) the area could be redeveloped, or at least rehabilitated, as a higher quality convenience shopping area. Plans for this area will be greatly affected by development proposals recommended for adjacent properties.

C-4 Northwest of South 60th and West Beloit is a used car dealership and a two-family dwelling. Although the commercial structure could be reused for similar purposes and the house could remain, the area could accommodate more intensive development that would be beneficial to the neighborhood. Two possibilities include: (1) commercial development that complements the nearby business area and takes advantage of its visible location; (2) high density residential development that encourages additional people to reside in Burnham. Recommended plans for the area will partially depend on uses suggested for nearby properties.

C-5 This area is located at the heart of the neighborhood. Bordered by West Burnham, West Beloit, and South 60th, it is developed for single and two-family residential dwellings. Although the housing is well-maintained, the area is not used intensively. The area's location is the critical factor in this case. Because it is nearby to shopping, a more intensive residential use could be appropriately situated on this site. The increased number of residents within walking distance of the shopping area would help ensure the viability of businesses along West Burnham Street. To use land in this area more effectively and eliminate unnecessary vehicle turning movements on West Burnham and West Beloit from South 59th, parts of South 59th could be closed. This would provide additional land for multiple-family housing and park development.

IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

Problems and opportunities that characterize Burnham can be related to needs. For example, what is needed to solve existing problems? Also, what is needed make sure available opportunities are used to advantage? The plans that guide the revitalization of Burnham must respond to resident needs as much as possible. It is worth taking a moment, then, to review the basic needs of the neighborhood.

1. Burnham's identity needs to be strengthened. The neighborhood has few characteristics that make it truly distinctive. Plans must work toward creating an identity residents can relate with and take pride in.
2. Existing businesses that are viable need to be reinforced. The long-term success of the business district will help make sure a strong neighborhood identity is maintained.
3. Businesses need to be concentrated in one area, rather than strung out along major roadways. This will help strengthen Burnham's character.

4. Burnham has the potential for becoming a strong pedestrian-oriented neighborhood. Plans for revitalization need to capitalize on this advantage.
5. Mixed land use conflicts and encroachment are evident in certain areas. There is an immediate need to discourage these conditions from persisting, nor can they be allowed to develop in the future.
6. Changes in land use should aim at strengthening the character and viability of adjacent activities. There is a need to identify areas that are most suitable for change and most appropriate for strengthening adjacent uses.
7. Creative approaches aimed at providing new parks and open spaces need to be developed. Attention should be directed at benefits derived from redevelopment and by enhancing commonly used areas in special ways.
8. Certain changes in circulation are needed to make sure that Burnham remains convenient for shoppers. Improvements at selected intersections and new parking facilities must be considered as part of these.



Relationship with the Master Plan for Land Use

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MASTER PLAN FOR LAND USE

West Allis' 1990 Master Plan for Land Use serves as a guide for decisions regarding development. All planning efforts, large or small, must be consistent with the guidelines and recommendations of the Master Plan. This approach makes sure that land use decisions are carefully coordinated as the City strives to reach its long-range goals.

Neighborhood land use and design plans should be an integral part of the City's overall planning program. These plans have the advantage of evaluating land use at site-specific levels and making recommendations that respond to the needs of each site. Sites requiring special treatments can be identified and dealt with as necessary. In this manner, neighborhood land use plans refine the Master Plan by demonstrating how the Plan's guidelines and recommendations can be implemented.

As indicated in the Master Plan for Land Use, Burnham is designated for commercial, industrial and residential land use. These designations are generalized and must be interpreted at site-specific levels. The guidelines and recommendations included in the Master Plan should be consulted before determining the land use for individual parcels. This section summarizes the statements in the Plan that have a bearing on land use in Burnham. Using the Master Plan's goals as a starting point, the concepts put forth by supporting objectives, policies and guidelines will be summarized. Site-specific references will illustrate where the concepts have relevance in the neighborhood. Labels found on the Summary Analysis (Figure 3) will be used for reference.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Two goals are included in the residential land use section of the Master Plan. The first directs that the Plan:

Ensure the long-term viability of the City's major residential areas.

This goal means that major neighborhoods found in West Allis must be preserved and protected. This is directly relevant to Burnham in terms of its three stable residential areas marked A-1 in the Summary Analysis.

To ensure their long-term viability, the Master Plan recommends that certain policies and actions be taken. Those which are relevant to Burnham include:

1. Discouraging commercial land use in areas that are predominantly residential. Commercial encroachment occurring among the homes located just south of West Mitchell Street near South 60th Street (issue areas C-1) is a prime example of a situation that must be discouraged. Another example is found at the northwest corner of South 56th and West Burnham Streets (C-2).
2. Separating conflicting land uses that are adjacent to one another by using buffers. This strategy has relevance between the industrial area (A-2) and commercial area (B-6) located southwest of West Burnham and South 60th.
3. Encouraging the redevelopment of residential properties consistent with an area's predominant housing type. This suggests that the rest of B-2 could be appropriately redeveloped for multiple-family dwellings.

The second residential land use goal is to:

Ensure the availability of land for new residential development and establish guidelines and programs which identify areas appropriate for redevelopment.

This goal is concerned with the supply and location of housing in West Allis. Properties, both developed and undeveloped, must be identified that can accommodate new housing. In Burnham, redevelopment must be primarily relied on to change the supply or location of housing in the neighborhood.

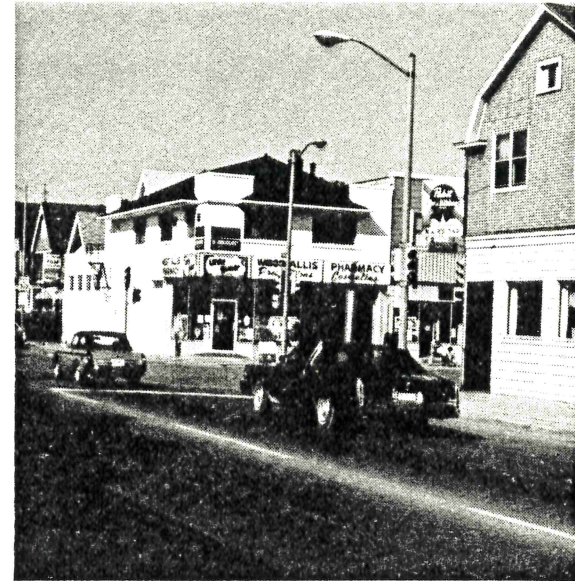
Based on the Master Plan's guidelines, areas having certain qualities are most suitable for redevelopment. Examples of these include being within walking distance, and adjacent to, a shopping area, high structural density, high presence of elderly, and lack of open space. Based on these traits and others, areas that are suitable for redevelopment include C-2, C-4 and C-5.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

One goal covers commercial land use in the Master Plan. It states:

Maintain the City's commercial activities.

This goal addresses the importance of maintaining commercial opportunities located in West Allis. In developed neighborhoods like Burnham, commercial districts should be strengthened by concentrating growth in a core area, rather than permitting strip commercial development. Various landscaping and aesthetic treatments are suggested as ways of heightening the identity of the shopping area. The principal area in Burnham where local-oriented commercial opportunities should be concentrated is along West Burnham (B-4). Additional local opportunities can be appropriately channeled to C-3. Businesses having a draw larger than the local area should be situated in area B-6. Automobile-oriented services can be accommodated at the intersections of West Burnham and West Beloit (B-5), and West Beloit and South 60th (B-7).



INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The Master Plan puts forth one goal for industrial land use. It states:

Maintain the City's industrial base.

Like commercial development, this goal addresses the importance of maintaining the City's industrial establishments. Based on the Master Plan, Burnham's industrial area (A-2) should be improved by encouraging aesthetic improvements, limiting noise impacts on the neighborhood, and creating economic incentives that help ensure the continued operation of existing businesses.

OTHER LAND USE

The Master Plan contains numerous guidelines and recommendations for other land uses. Those that are relevant to conditions in Burnham include the following:

1. The availability of utilities should parallel redevelopment activities for Burnham. This is particularly true if a significant increase demand for water results from redevelopment projects.
2. Park and open space opportunities should be available for all residents in the neighborhood. To alleviate deficiencies that exist, several actions can be taken: (1) identify and acquire properties which are appropriate for park development, within both the residential and commercial areas; (2) enhance public walkways; (3) close off streets to make new areas available for pedestrian use; (4) highlight open spaces that exist, like the entryway on the west side of the neighborhood (B-1).
3. Improve circulation for the residents of Burnham by: (1) highlighting the area's pedestrian orientation through the use of lighting, street furniture and landscaping treatments; (2) creating a bike path system; and (3) improving parking facilities where necessary.

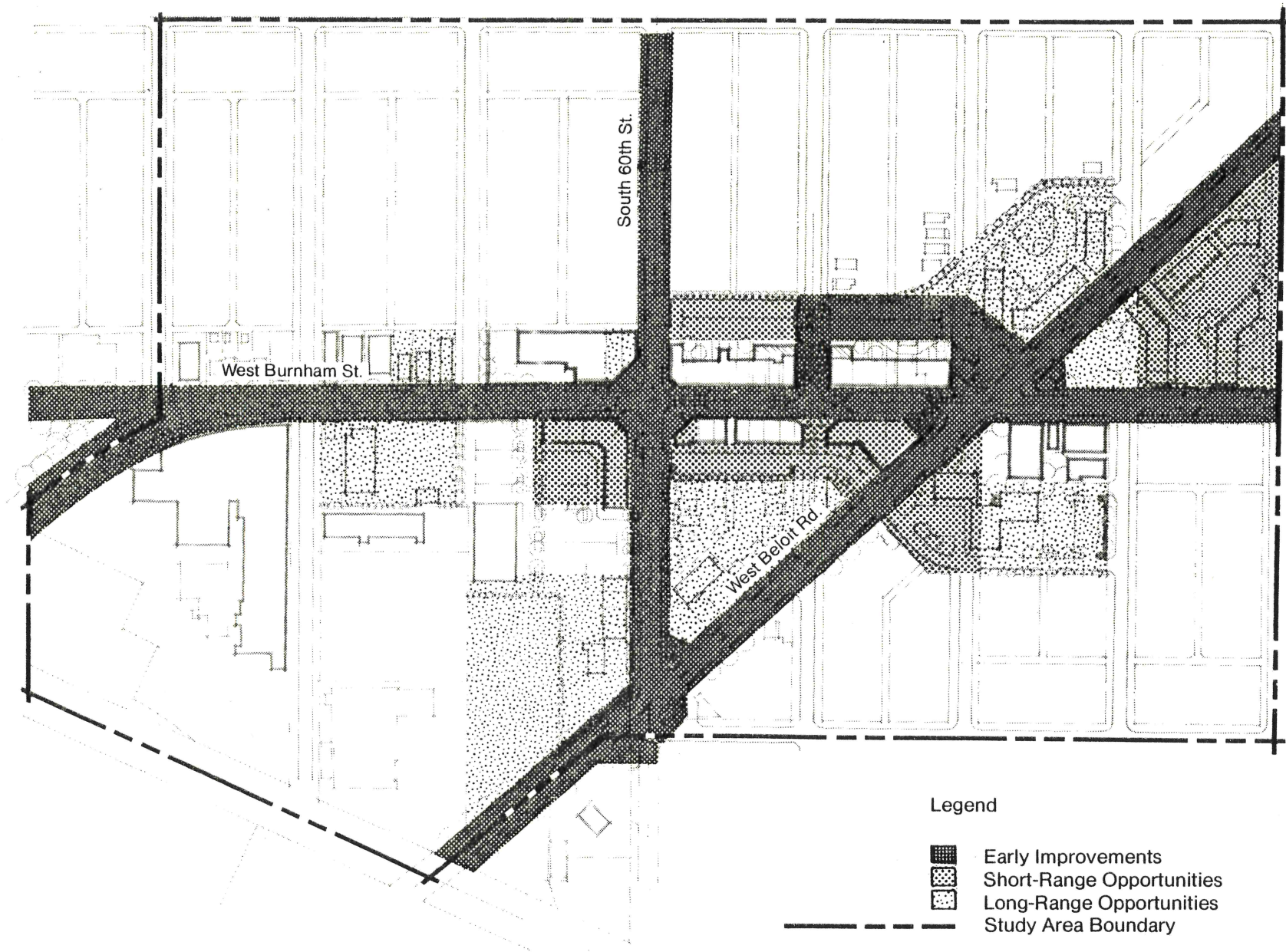
Recommended Actions

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following recommendations should be viewed as elements of an action plan leading to the betterment of the Burnham neighborhood. They are grouped into three overlapping phases including early improvements, short-range opportunities and long-range opportunities (see Figure 4).

Early improvements include actions that can be carried out during the next five years. They usually involve public lands and funds, and programs currently available for use by the City. Private investment, although limited, usually begins during the middle-to-late stages of this phase. Most improvements, whether publicly or privately funded, do not involve major land purchases or redevelopment. Changes at this stage are critical because they demonstrate the public sector's commitment to revitalizing the neighborhood and, hopefully, instigate private concerns to invest in Burnham as well. While recommended planning programs are applicable throughout the neighborhood, most early improvements of a physical nature fall within the rights-of-way of Burnham's streets.

Short-range opportunities will include improvements that can be accomplished in roughly three-to-ten years. Publicly-sponsored planning programs will be expected to mature and be fully operative by this time. Public and private monies will continue to subsidize physical improvements, but private sources will assume increasing levels of investment responsibility during this phase. Land acquisition will assume greater significance as properties are assembled for initial stages of redevelopment. Circulation improvements required to service redeveloped areas will be started at this stage. New parking lots, redeveloped business and residential areas, and additional park opportunities also are part of the physical changes planned.



Long-range opportunities involve improvements that often take from eight to twelve years to accomplish. During this time, major land acquisition programs will be undertaken and redevelopment efforts accommodated in these selected areas. Private funding sources will be relied upon to finance most improvements with public monies serving a support role. Areas where long-range opportunities should be directed are identified in Figure 4. These redevelopment opportunities, as they are realized, will combine with improvements that occurred during the early and short-term phases to provide a complete revitalization program for Burnham.

EARLY IMPROVEMENTS

Numerous opportunities for improvement exist in Burnham during the next five years.

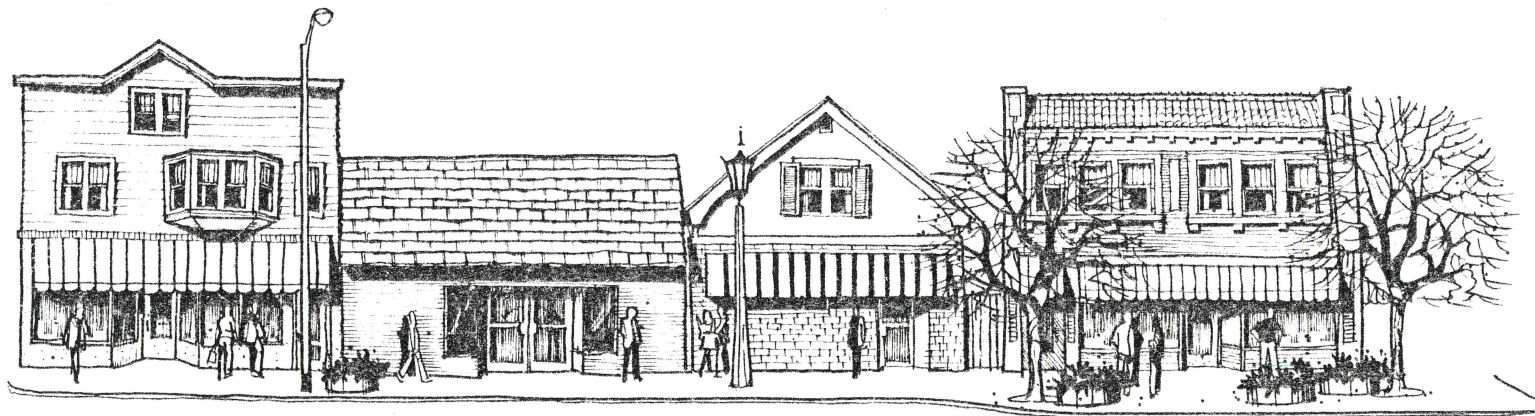
Codes and Ordinances

During the early improvements phase, immediate attention must be directed toward the amendment or development of relevant codes and ordinances. First, it is recommended the City's zoning ordinance be updated to reflect the principles of this plan. For example, classifications must be designated which prohibit commercial encroachment in residential areas (for example, the south side of West Mitchell around South 61st and South 62nd Streets), which prohibit businesses from stringing out along major roadways (like West Beloit) and make new housing alternatives possible. Some of these ordinance changes should occur immediately, particularly those that strengthen stable areas. Others that deal with future land use over the short and long terms should be drafted as opportunities for growth and redevelopment arise.

Second, the City's sign ordinance should be strictly enforced, and nonconforming signs eliminated. Too many signs exist, and few are compatible with one another or building fronts relative to materials, sizes and messages conveyed. Legal proceedings that can be initiated to alleviate part, or all, of these conditions should be started immediately. Also, neighborhood merchants should encourage one another to improve nonconforming signs that have existed prior to the adoption of the City's ordinance. Changes should not occur without guidance, though. They should be coordinated so that the overall effect is both visually pleasing, as well as distinctive in nature. The Burnham Village Association would be an appropriate group to take a lead in orchestrating this effort.

Third, it is recommended that architectural guidelines be developed that encourage exterior building improvements (see Figure 5). Compatible storefront treatments, relative to materials and colors, should be regulated through the development of an ordinance. Particular attention should be directed at developing guidelines that preserve the neighborhood's historic resources. Although emphasis should be placed on improving existing conditions, future developments must be carefully regulated as well. Buildings should not overwhelm existing structures in either overall floor area or height. Also, new structures should be harmonious in terms of construction materials. Like signage controls, the development of these regulations could be promoted by the Village Association, as well as the Planning Department.

Fourth, an ordinance covering the use and maintenance of alleyways should be developed. Old and unused cars, and poorly maintained garages tend to plague the neighborhood's alleys. Every effort must be made to clean up these alleys due to their detrimental effect on the quality of the stable residential areas.



Fifth, site development guidelines must be developed now to ensure redevelopment anticipated during the short and long-term phases is appropriately regulated. Emphasis should be placed on required setbacks and landscape treatments. Parking lots should be screened and building sites landscaped.

Sixth, the City should be strongly supported in its effort to regulate excessive noise and vibration generated by industry in the neighborhood.

Housing

The "West Allis Housing Plan" recommends that several programs be used to improve residential conditions in neighborhoods like Burnham.⁵ These programs are based on several policies which have City-wide application, as well as some that address problems specific to different kinds of neighborhoods. Recommended programs having City-wide relevance that would benefit Burnham include:

1. Developing and enforcing a rigorous housing code. Because rehabilitation will play a primary role in correcting major and minor housing defects, this action is particularly appropriate. This will help make sure the neighborhood's stable residential areas remain as such, rather than becoming areas requiring reinforcement or worse.

⁵ Johnson, Johnson & Roy/inc., West Allis Housing Plan; 1979.

2. Requiring compliance with building codes to ensure the construction of safe, high-quality residences. As new infill housing is built and later as redevelopment proceeds, stringent building code compliance will help guarantee that new structures will remain in sound condition for long periods of time.
3. Evaluating the condition of Burnham's homes on a regular basis. This will permit the identification of exterior problems before they become too large or expensive to handle. Regular housing surveys also are required to identify problems which might be eligible for specific funding programs.
4. Providing housing assistance for low and moderate income families. Relative to the City, Burnham has a high percentage of elderly and lower than average family income. Housing assistance programs, therefore, should be targeted in this neighborhood.

Additional revitalization programs that address Burnham's particular housing situation are recommended. They are listed in Table I according to the problems they address and the results expected from program implementation. Overall, these programs and the ones previously listed will strengthen the neighborhood's stable residential areas and help ensure they remain a primary neighborhood resource.

TABLE I - RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Program*</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|---|---|---|
| Evidence of major and minor structural problems among residential dwellings | <u>Rehabilitation Loan and Grant Program (LO)</u> | Improves housing quality resulting from rehabilitation of residential structures by property owners |
| | Community Development Block Grant funds available for structural rehabilitation to low and moderate income homeowners and landlords | |
| | <u>Rehabilitation Loans: Section 312 (F)</u> | Revitalizes neighborhood as a result of upgrading structures characterized by poor maintenance |
| | Federal loans directly available at less than 3% interest to owners of residential or nonresidential properties for rehabilitation | |
| | <u>Housing Construction Program (F/S)</u> | Results in a coordinated comprehensive rehabilitation program that focuses on upgrading housing |
| | Joint state and federal program provides low interest rehabilitation loans, interest subsidies and deferred payment loans to low income families | |
| | <u>Emergency Rehabilitation Grants or Loans (LO)</u> | Maintains housing quality resulting from rehabilitation efforts that are undertaken as necessary |
| | Community Development Block Grant funds available for emergency interior or exterior housing repairs | |
| | <u>Home Maintenance Education Program (LO)</u> | Better housing quality and strengthened neighborhood character resulting from the encouragement of home repair by individual owners |
| | Education program administered by Neighborhood Action Council or voluntary associations and supported by media, government officials, and schools which makes assorted classes on home repair and decoration available to interested homeowners | |

* Letters in parentheses after program names stand for: F = Federal Program, S = State Program, LO = Local Program (Optional).

TABLE I - RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS (Cont'd)

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Program*</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|--|--|--|
| Evidence of major and minor structural problems among residential dwellings (cont'd) | <u>Housing Maintenance Code (LO)</u> Establishes standards for exterior and interior building conditions and makes provisions for code enforcement and compliance | Higher quality of housing resulting from increased levels of maintenance throughout the neighborhood |
| Low proportion of homeownership in neighborhood | <u>Homeownership Assistance: Section 235 (F)</u> Federal mortgage insurance and interest rate reductions available for new and rehabilitated units <u>Basic Home Mortgage: Section 203(b) (F)</u> Federal mortgage insurance for 90%, 30-year mortgages used to purchase new or existing one-to-four family units <u>Special Credit Risks: Section 237 (F)</u> Insurance provided to local lending institutions against losses incurred on residential mortgages extended to marginal credit risk families who benefit from financial counseling <u>Neighborhood-Based Homeownership Counseling (LO)</u> Cooperative organization involving public and private agencies which offers counseling and education services in areas of financial management and homeownership | Increases neighborhood stability resulting from purchase of new and rehabilitated units by moderate income persons Increases neighborhood stability resulting from homeownership among high risk, moderate income families Increases neighborhood stability resulting from higher rates of homeownership among families having marginal credit risk ratings Increases neighborhood stability resulting from successful homeownership experiences among moderate income families |

TABLE I - RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS (Cont'd)

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Program*</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Lack of neighborhood revitalization | <u>Architectural Control Ordinance (LO)</u> New development, redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts must be compatible with architectural styles, materials, colors and building sizes in neighborhood | Preservation of neighborhood character without discouraging major investment activities |
| | <u>Alley Ordinance (LO)</u> Local and state guidelines dealing with use of alleys relative to garage maintenance, garbage container placement, and removal of abandoned vehicles | Enhances neighborhood character resulting from appropriate alleyway use and enforced maintenance |
| | <u>Public Improvement Program (LO)</u> Public service improvements targeted in areas where deficiencies are evident or anticipated | Neighborhood revitalization resulting from public financial commitments and subsequent private sector investment |
| | <u>Neighborhood Action Council (LO)</u> Increased citizen participation in neighborhood planning prompts formation of Council, and designation of City representative who acts as an information resource and liaison officer with City government | Strengthens commitment on part of residents to neighborhoods, increases awareness of local problems by government officials, and facilitates overall coordination of efforts aimed at successful neighborhood revitalization |
| | <u>Neighborhood Strategy Areas (F)</u> Additional Section 8 Housing Assistance Payment funds targeted in areas where Community Development Block Grant monies are used for revitalization projects | Achievement of comprehensive revitalization program in selected neighborhood that emphasizes short-term housing revitalization and coordinated community development activities |

TABLE I - RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS (Cont'd)

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Program*</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|---|--|---|
| Lack of coordinated neighborhood investment | <u>Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (F)</u> | Increases level of investment in neighborhood resulting from financial institutions becoming involved with public and private improvement programs |
| | Regulated financial institutions must demonstrate that their deposit facilities serve resident needs for credit services in communities where they are chartered to do business | |
| | <u>Revolving Loan Pool (LO)</u> | Revitalization of housing resulting from financial commitments made by local institutions on behalf of a broad range of neighborhood projects |
| | Local financial institutions contribute funds at a low interest rate to a pool for distribution as loans by the City or neighborhood agency to individuals interested in buying real estate or making improvements in currently owned properties | |
| | <u>Federal Housing Administration (F)</u> | Revitalization of housing stock and business district due to federal incentives made available to local financial institutions |
| | Improvement programs that rely on federally-insured financial institutions to promote residential and commercial rehabilitation efforts | |
| | <u>Neighborhood Housing Services Program (F)</u> | Neighborhood revitalization and stabilization resulting from investment strategies that serve to initiate capital investments by local residents and businesses |
| | Federal assistance in terms of comprehensive investment program made available to cities which demonstrate a cooperative spirit among local public agencies, lending institutions and neighborhood organizations | |

TABLE I - RECOMMENDED HOUSING PROGRAMS (Cont'd)

| <u>Problem</u> | <u>Program*</u> | <u>Result</u> |
|--|--|--|
| High proportion of low and moderate income renters | <p><u>Lower Income Rental Assistance: Section 8 (F)</u></p> <p>Rental assistance available to households whose incomes are 80% or less than the median income for households in the SMSA (assisted household pays 25% of its gross income for rents and program pays difference between household's payment and contract rent)</p> | Neighborhood stability resulting from less turnover prompted by increases in contract rent |
| Inadequate monitoring of housing conditions | <p><u>Neighborhood Housing Condition Survey (LO)</u></p> <p>Survey regularly conducted to identify structures in need of repair</p> <p><u>Housing Maintenance Code (LO)</u></p> <p>Establishes standards for exterior and interior building conditions and makes provisions for code enforcement and compliance</p> | <p>Level of housing quality remains high because problems are identified before they become too pronounced and beyond repair</p> <p>Higher quality of housing resulting from increased levels of maintenance throughout the neighborhood</p> |
| High percentage of elderly and retired heads of households | <p><u>Direct Loans for Housing for the Elderly or Handicapped: Section 202 (F)</u></p> <p>Provides direct federal loans to aid in the construction or rehabilitation of rental and cooperative housing for the elderly or handicapped</p> | Increases supply of housing for elderly and handicapped which serves to meet neighborhood's demand |

Right-of-Way Improvements

Several right-of-way improvements should be undertaken during the next one to five years. These physical changes are intended to enhance Burnham's image and help make the neighborhood a more appealing place in which to live, work and shop. Funds for most of these changes are expected to come from community development appropriations that the City receives on a yearly basis. Recommended circulation, landscaping and park improvements include (see Figure 6):

- I. Changing the configuration of the intersection at West Burnham and West Beloit. This involves realigning South 58th Street north of the current intersection to create a new "T" intersection. Traffic flows north of the intersection will then be channeled onto a roadway capable of handling additional volumes (West Beloit). Businesses along this major route should benefit from increased exposure.

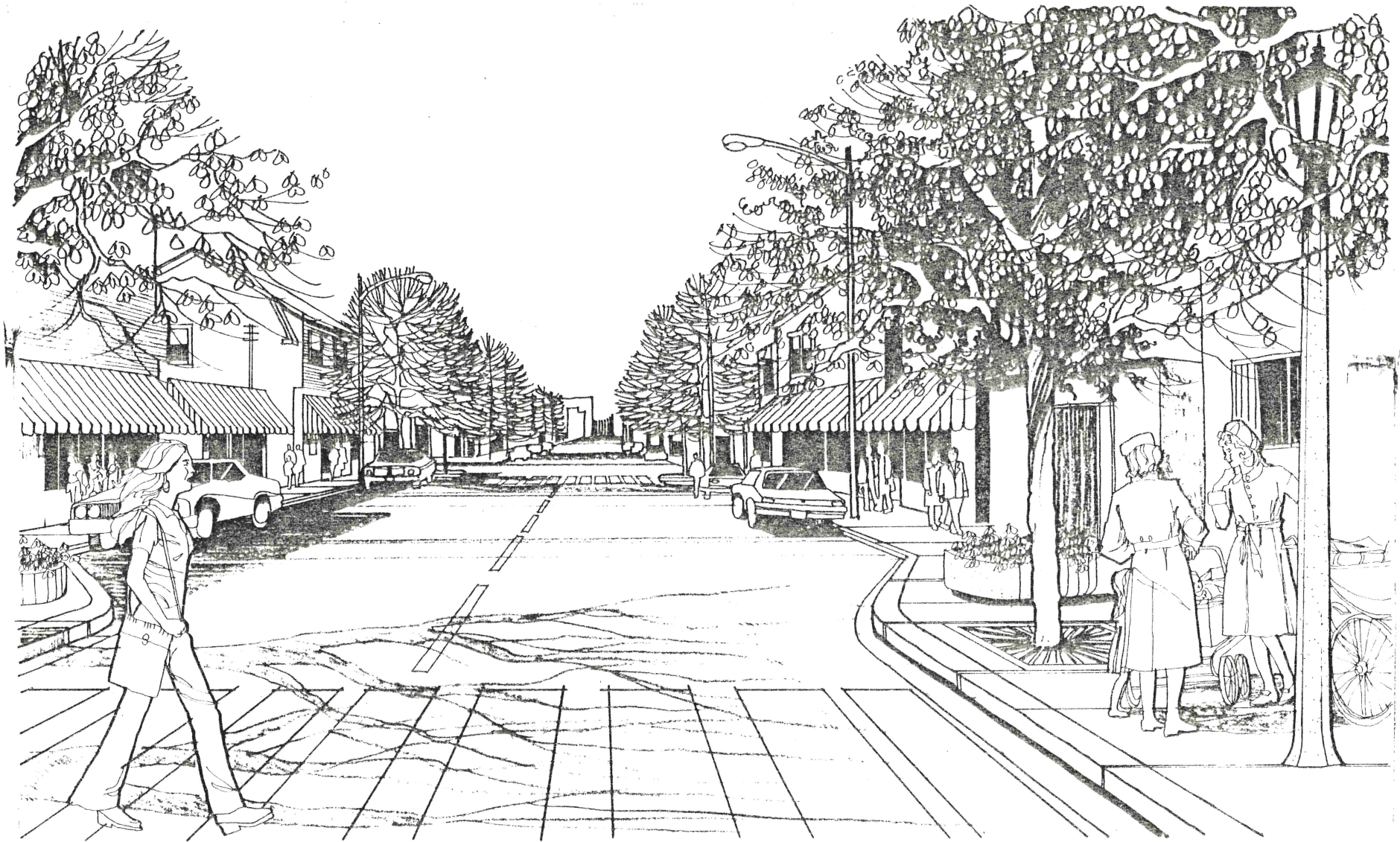
The modified intersection also will be safer and more pleasant for pedestrians. By eliminating a street from this intersection, sidewalks can be widened and a park developed on the vacated street end. Distances across streets will be reduced, and shoppers will benefit further from the park made available for sitting and socializing. Benches, trash receptacles and information boards giving notice of neighborhood events should be included in this park. Landscaping improvements on all four corners of the intersection also are recommended due to the pleasant visual image created for drivers entering the main business area (see Figure 7).



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**Figure 7 Recommended Entryway Improvements:
Intersection of West Burnham Street
and West Beloit Road (looking east)**

2. Modifying the intersection at South 60th and West Beloit. West Rogers should become a one-way street going east to South 59th so that all vehicles passing through the intersection are controlled by existing traffic lights. Because room is available at the corners of the intersection, tree plantings should be encouraged. The intersection should become safer for walkers and more visually appealing as an entryway as a result.
3. Improving the intersection at West Burnham and South 60th. Sidewalks should be widened (4-6 feet) with a generous turning radius to make currently awkward turning movements easier. The widened sidewalk will also alleviate existing pedestrian congestion, accommodate increased numbers of shoppers expected in the future, and make tree plantings possible.
4. Widening the sidewalks at selected points along West Burnham between South 58th and South 60th Streets and for the first 100 feet north of West Burnham along South 59th Street. These improvements will create additional room for pedestrians and make tree plantings possible. A limited number of parking spots will be used for this improvement along West Burnham, but the spaces lost will be regained once off-street parking lots are constructed. On-street parking spaces that are not used should remain as a convenience for shoppers who only need to make a quick stop (see Figure 8).
5. Constructing an off-street parking lot behind the businesses on the north side of West Burnham. This lot will be serviced by a new roadway link between South 58th and South 59th and will compensate for the spaces lost on West Burnham. Additional off-street parking recommended for development during the short-term should be constructed during this phase if demand warrants it. Because these proposed lots will be adjacent to a residential area, space must be provided for tree plantings that visually screen the lot from the view of nearby property owners.



In addition to these improvements, a major street tree planting program is recommended that screens objectionable views, reduces noise and creates a generally pleasant environment. During this phase, trees should be planted along:

1. West Burnham Street between South 57th and South 63rd Streets. Clusters of trees should be planted at the Y-intersection of West Burnham and West Becher Place, and the intersection of West Burnham and West Beloit.
2. South 60th Street between West Mitchell and West Rogers.
3. West Beloit between South 57th Street and the railroad tracks.
4. The northeast corner of West Burnham and South 61st Streets where the bowling alley is located.

Aside from these specific areas, current tree planting programs should be continued for all residential areas in the neighborhood.

Commercial Revitalization

Several activities should be started by the City during the early improvements phase to help revitalize Burnham's business area. These recommended activities should be carefully and quickly initiated to demonstrate the City's commitment to improving the core business area around West Burnham. Actions taken will help stimulate interest among business owners to participate in the revitalization process as they see how planned changes help strengthen the vitality of their businesses.

The code and ordinance changes, and circulation improvements discussed earlier are critical elements of the overall business revitalization program. In addition, the following recommendations will complement these efforts:

1. The Burnham Village Association must actively promote neighborhood business interests. The Association should: (a) establish channels of communication with the City so that a working relationship between the two groups can develop; (b) maintain contact with City departments regarding matters of concern and work cooperatively with officials to improve neighborhood conditions; (c) assume responsibility for promoting Burnham as an area having a variety of shopping opportunities, all within walking distance of one another; (d) organize special sale days and other promotional activities, like special decorations that coincide with various holidays; (e) work with the Chamber of Commerce to recruit businesses that would be desirable to have in the area, like a dime store; (f) promote the notion of "Burnham Village" in newspapers, a neighborhood newsletter and on signs; (g) work with other groups, like Project Involve, and encourage them to assist with revitalization.
2. The City should encourage local business owners to participate in Small Business Administration (SBA) programs when possible. Business management counseling is available that could help lessen the amount of turnover in Burnham. Also, low interest loan programs are available for business construction or expansion, purchase of supplies, materials or machinery, and working capital. Working in conjunction with the Liberty Savings and Loan Association, the SBA could establish a mutually beneficial situation for more than one business in Burnham.

As right-of-way improvements are made, loans become available, the Village Association becomes more established, and City programs take effect, business owners should be encouraged to improve their buildings. The business area's image will never be as visually pleasing, or as marketable to potential shoppers, if private individuals do not invest in the area. Specific improvements which the Village Association should advocate and coordinate as soon as possible include:

1. Eliminating unnecessary signs and encouraging the use of complementary colors and materials for those which remain.

2. Upgrading building fronts by following architectural and preservation guidelines, by using complementary colors and materials all through the business area, and by creating a pedestrian orientation by highlighting building entryways through the use of special lighting, railings, awnings, and signage (see Figure 9).

Historic Preservation

Several buildings and homes in Burnham are interesting due to their architectural styling and detailing. These structures add a degree of character to the neighborhood that will be lost if protective measures are not developed to ensure their longevity. A recommended first step aimed at preserving and protecting these resources involves developing architectural guidelines. These guidelines should encourage owners to restore historic structures to their original condition by using materials and colors similar to those originally used.

Before preservation efforts can begin, it is recommended a survey be conducted to identify neighborhood historic resources. Specific plans can then be developed which address site specific problems and opportunities. One known resource is a late 1800's home located just west of the intersection of West Beloit and South 60th. Barely visible from the road, this two-story structure is poorly located in an area that is commercially oriented. To preserve this residence, it is recommended it be relocated to a vacant lot elsewhere in the neighborhood and restored to its original condition.

Although it could be relocated for private residential use, relocation funded with public monies should also be considered. A site near the business area on a major road would guarantee its exposure. If renovated with public monies, the building could be used as a community meeting hall for neighborhood groups, senior citizens and the Village Association.



Priorities for Change

All changes recommended during this phase that involve public policies and programs should be made as soon as time and manpower resources permit. If demanding schedules necessitate that priorities be set, programs dealing with housing and zoning changes should be addressed first. Improvements in these two areas are expected to contribute more to Burnham's revitalization than other program changes due to the range of influence they have on the neighborhood.

Similarly, priorities for physical improvements must be set as financial resources will not be unlimited during the first year of this plan's implementation. Because certain projects are likely to have a greater impact on the neighborhood than others, these should be pursued first. The City's capital improvement program and community development fund appropriations should be structured to reflect these priorities. Of course, various circumstances will arise that may cause these priorities to be reordered. Hence, a degree of flexibility must characterize this list.

Suggested priorities for early physical improvements by the public sector include:

1. Sidewalk widenings and tree plantings in the shopping area between South 58th and South 60th Streets.
2. Constructing a park north of West Burnham on realigned South 58th Street next to the hardware store.
3. Buying land for the construction of an off-street parking lot north of West Burnham and following through with construction.
4. Entryway improvements in the area of West Burnham and West Becher Place, including intersection changes, trees, other landscaping and a sign announcing the arrival at Burnham Village.

5. Landscaping and intersection treatments at the corner of South 60th and West Beloit Road.
6. Additional tree and shrub plantings at West Burnham and West Beloit.

SHORT-RANGE OPPORTUNITIES

The following detailed recommendations constitute the primary actions that should be undertaken during the next three-to-ten years. Actions intended to strengthen programs begun during the early improvements phase should be pursued vigorously. Recommendations concerned with redevelopment, though, should be pursued as opportunities arise (see Figure 10).

Housing

Programs begun during the early improvements phase should become fully operative during this time. It is recommended an assessment of their impact on the neighborhood should be conducted during this phase. Modifications relative to areas of emphasis in the housing program may be necessary based on the results of this evaluation.

A primary thrust of the program during this phase should be on providing new housing opportunities in the neighborhood. This will create a larger market of potential shoppers and help ensure the viability of existing businesses, as well as help attract new ones. During this phase, new housing units should be introduced in two ways. First, apartments should be provided above existing stores wherever possible. Second, selected areas, like the property northeast of the intersection of West Burnham and West Beloit, should be redeveloped to increase the number of available residences. The site plan for this area must be careful to maximize open space opportunities by using a cluster development strategy for townhouses or condominiums.

Circulation

Traffic along South 57th between West Burnham and West Beloit is extremely light. If the area just east of this link is redeveloped as recommended, this part of South 57th should be vacated. This will free up land that could be used for residential development, provide room for park development, and further enhance the visual image of the east end of Burnham. If the opportunity arises, removal of the gas station immediately west of South 57th would provide even more room for park development.

Parking lots still under construction from the early improvements stage should be completed at this time. If demand warrants it, additional off-street parking is recommended for development in three areas (see Figure 10):

1. Behind the businesses on the north side of West Burnham between South 59th and South 60th Streets. Fifty additional spaces can be provided in this area. Enough room at the north edge of the lot should be provided to plant trees and screen parked cars from adjacent residences.
2. Behind the businesses on the south side of West Burnham between South 59th and South 60th Streets. Roughly 30 cars can be accommodated here. A new road, linking West Burnham and West Beloit, should be constructed to service this lot.
3. Behind the businesses on the southwest corner of South 60th and West Burnham, several unused garages will need to be removed before paving can proceed. Roughly 25 spaces will be provided in this area to conveniently serve the bowling alley and stores along West Burnham and West Beloit.

Commercial Revitalization

Actions taken to strengthen the business area during the early improvements phase should attract additional shoppers to Burnham. This trend will encourage merchants to upgrade their stores or possibly expand. Favorable market conditions might even induce new business owners to locate in the area. Expanding or new businesses having a local orientation should be located along West Burnham Street between South 60th and West Beloit, and immediately southwest of the intersection of South 60th and West Burnham Streets. It is recommended that expansion and growth be accommodated by:

1. Providing additional store space behind existing shops in selected places. Room exists for additions right behind the stores located on either side of South 59th on the north side of West Burnham.
2. Developing the parking lot next to Liberty Savings and Loan Association for a retail store, after off-street parking is provided to the rear of the Savings and Loan Association.
3. Redeveloping the area southeast of South 59th and West Burnham for convenience shops.
4. Developing the vacant properties located across the street from the bowling alley for retail stores. Further, it is recommended that businesses that draw from beyond the neighborhood locate between West Burnham and West Beloit, just west of South 60th.

Legislative support for redevelopment activities proposed in this plan, including commercial and residential, is provided by Wisconsin's "Urban Redevelopment Law."⁶ This statute recognizes that redevelopment sometimes is required to facilitate urban revitalization. It grants cities within the State the power to establish a redevelopment corporation that can be used to coordinate and implement major redevelopment activities. Although certain public funds are available to West Allis for land acquisition, certain efforts may prove too costly or ambitious to cover them within the City's allocated budget. For these cases, it is recommended the notion of a redevelopment corporation be considered as a possible way to initiate desired land use changes.

Parks and Landscaping

In addition to the parks proposed for development in the business area, parks must also be provided in the residential areas. Currently, no appropriate lots exist for development. Areas selected must be centrally located and, in the case of parks to be used by children, should not front heavily traveled roadways. It is recommended that two parks be developed between West Burnham and West Mitchell Streets, one east and one west of South 60th Street. A third park is recommended for development between West Burnham and West Rogers Streets, east of South 59th.

Landscaping programs begun during the early improvements phase should be completed at this time. This includes street tree planting schemes and other improvements recommended for sidewalks, intersections and parking lots.

Priorities for Change

Like early improvement priorities, time and resources required to refine relevant City policies and programs should be allocated as early as possible during this phase. In particular, efforts that may be identified during evaluations as being nonproductive should be redirected toward more effective programs.

⁶Wisconsin Statutes, 66.405-66.435, 1977.

Priorities for physical improvements, including redevelopment, are less predictable than they were for the early improvements phase. The availability of land, political influences in the City, and the desires and means of developers will affect where major projects occur first. When a choice can be made, though, the following lists will provide guidance.

Recommended priorities for short-range improvements requiring City involvement include:

1. The completion of an off-street parking lot north of West Burnham Street.
2. The construction of a new road and parking lot behind the shops on the south side of West Burnham.
3. The vacation of South 57th, between West Burnham and West Beloit.
4. Construction of additional parking southeast of West Burnham and South 60th.
5. Park development in residential areas.

Priorities for private sector improvements include:

1. New housing east of West Beloit and north of West Burnham.
2. New retail commercial development at the southwest corner of West Burnham and West Beloit.
3. New business development along West Burnham near South 60th, across from the bowling alley.

LONG-RANGE OPPORTUNITIES

Several areas in Burnham have been selected as being most appropriate for redevelopment activities. Although the revitalization of this neighborhood does not depend on changes occurring in these areas, certain benefits would be gained from their redevelopment.

Housing

Of the long-range opportunity areas identified for redevelopment in Figure 11, five are recommended to involve residential properties.

1. Residential redevelopment started northeast of the West Burnham/ West Beloit intersection during an earlier phase should be completed at this time. Townhouses are recommended and should be situated in clusters to maximize open space. The southwestern tip of this area, currently used for a gas station, should eventually be developed as a neighborhood park.
2. A small area between South 57th and South 58th Streets, north of West Beloit Road, is recommended for townhouses within the context of a cluster development. This will maximize the number of units that can be built and visually complement the first redevelopment project.
3. Between South 61st and South 62nd Streets, and north of West Burnham, mixed land uses could be more intensively used for multiple-family dwellings. Redevelopment of this sort would be more compatible with land uses located east and west of the site along West Burnham.
4. Properties located northeast of the intersection of South 60th and West Beloit offer excellent redevelopment opportunities. This area is bordered by roads on three sides and businesses on the fourth, and provides an excellent location for housing within walking distance of various businesses. Medium density residential development is recommended for this site.
5. If additional space for medium density housing is needed, the area southeast of the West Burnham and West Beloit intersection should be considered.

Several benefits will be realized if any, or all, of these areas are redeveloped as recommended. Among the benefits are these:

1. By increasing the density of housing units, more persons can be housed in the neighborhood than can at present. The larger market of potential shoppers will help support businesses in the neighborhood, as well as attract additional shops to Burnham.
2. All areas selected for redevelopment are located within walking distance of the business area. This condition is favorable for prospective residents, as well as stores in the neighborhood.
3. Redevelopment will permit the creation of new open spaces. This will help meet neighborhood demand for passive recreation areas.
4. Any redevelopment project that is undertaken will demonstrate a major commitment to the revitalization of Burnham. An investment of this size will increase people's confidence in the long-term stability of the area. Additional financial commitments would be likely to follow.
5. New housing alternatives will help to free up units that are not used as intensively as possible. Elderly couples wishing to remain in Burnham, for example, will have an opportunity to leave large houses and live in units which more closely meet their needs. In turn, larger families will have an opportunity to fill the houses that become available.

Commercial Revitalization

Several areas designated as long-range opportunities in Figure II are recommended for commercial redevelopment.

1. If the foreign car dealership located on West Burnham is ever sold, new commercial opportunities would be most appropriately situated in this building. Although another automobile franchise would be appropriate, the potential exists for enlarging the retail floor space for one or more stores.
2. Shops in two small areas located on the west side of South 60th south of West Burnham are not used as intensively as possible. Both areas could accommodate additional retail floor space and a second story for apartments.
3. A large area northwest of the intersection of West Beloit and South 60th could easily handle a major retail development. Underutilized as a used car lot and single-family residences, this land could serve as a shopping center site. New buildings could be constructed as an extension of existing retail space.

New retail opportunities in the area should complement, rather than replace, existing businesses. Commercial revitalization should aim to diversify the range and quality of goods and services that can be obtained in the area. Although certain low quality shops may not survive competition of any sort, higher quality businesses will replace these and further strengthen the commercial character of Burnham. In addition, revitalization must be careful to maintain at least one major community-wide retail attraction. Formerly, this was Farrell's, although its appeal as a grocery store was not as great as it might have been. A similar type of operation should be sought for this building and heavily promoted to make it as great a benefit as possible for Burnham.

Circulation

As housing and commercial redevelopment proceeds, and new off-street parking lots are built, new roads will need to be constructed to service these improvements. Hence, it is proposed that a 'ring road' concept be pursued as indicated on the long-range opportunities plan. These new roads will effectively serve the neighborhood's new developments as well as relieve West Burnham Street of some traffic congestion.

Priorities for Redevelopment

Among the areas identified as being appropriate for redevelopment, priorities for change include:

1. Completing the housing complex northeast of the intersection of West Burnham and West Beloit.
2. Completing the residential development north of West Burnham and east of South 58th.
3. Completing the commercial development near South 60th and West Beloit.
4. Roadway construction as needed to service these new developments.

CONCLUSION

As a basis for neighborhood revitalization, these actions as well as this entire plan constitute a beginning rather than an end. Implementation is yet to occur. Because no single program will revitalize Burnham by itself, implementation efforts must not subside until all actions are completed. Clearly, the impetus for achieving this is in the hands of City officials and residents of Burnham alike. Hence, a cooperative posture must be assumed by all persons involved to help ensure this plan is achieved and, most importantly, that a better living environment is created for all people residing in Burnham.

